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CLAIMS

Technology Center 2600

1-6. (canceled)

7. (currently amended) In an optical network comprising an optical splitter connected to (1) a working optical subscriber unit (OSU) of a working circuit via a working optical fiber, (2) a protection OSU of a protection circuit via a protection optical fiber, and (3) one or more optical network terminals (ONTs), a method for enabling fast protection switching from the working OSU to the protection OSU, comprising the steps of:

- (a) synchronizing the working and protection OSUs;
- (b) initiating a cell delineation procedure at the protection OSU during normal, non-ranging operations of the working OSU to enable the protection OSU to correctly delineate upstream cells;
- (c) measuring arrival times of corresponding upstream cells at both the working and protection OSUs; and
- (d) generating a propagation delay value based on the arrival times for use by the protection OSU for communications with the one or more ONTs if and when protection switching is implemented upon detection of a failure in the working circuit, wherein the optical network further comprises: one or more additional working OSUs, each connected via an additional working optical fiber to an additional optical splitter, which is further connected to one or more additional ONTs; and an optical switch connected to each of the optical splitters via a protection optical fiber and to the protection OSU, wherein the optical switch is controlled to sequentially connect the protection OSU to each of the optical splitters to implement steps (a) through (d) to generate a different propagation delay value for each working OSU for use by the protection OSU in ranging the one or more ONTs corresponding to a particular working OSU if and when protection switching is implemented upon detection of a failure in the working circuit corresponding to the particular working OSU.

8. (original) The invention of claim 7, wherein the optical splitter is a passive optical splitter and the optical network conforms to ITU-T Recommendation G.983.1.

9. (canceled)

10. (original) The invention of claim 7, wherein the corresponding upstream cells are upstream PLOAM cells that are not associated with ranging by the working OSU.

11. (original) The invention of claim 7, wherein the propagation delay value is generated taking into account differences in upstream and downstream transmission speeds that result from different upstream and downstream transmission wavelengths.

12. (previously presented) The invention of claim 7, wherein the protection OSU is added to the optical network after the working OSU has completed ranging for the one or more ONTs.

13. (original) The invention of claim 7, wherein the cell delineation procedure is implemented using a state machine comprising:

- (A) a hunt state wherein different timing positions are used for different BMR reset pulses;
 - (B) a presync state wherein a single timing position is used for different BMR reset pulses;
- and

(C) a sync state wherein a single timing position is used for different BMR reset pulses, wherein:

- (i) a state transition from the hunt state to the presync state occurs as soon as a first specified number of valid sets of data are identified;

10 (ii) a state transition from the presync state to the hunt state occurs as soon as a
11 second specified number of invalid sets of data are identified;
12 (iii) a state transition from the presync state to the sync state occurs after a third
13 specified number of consecutive valid sets of data are identified; and
14 (iv) a state transition from the sync state to the hunt state occurs after a fourth
15 specified number of consecutive invalid sets of data are identified.

1 14. (original) The invention of claim 13, wherein the first and second specified numbers are
2 both 1.

1 15. (original) The invention of claim 7, wherein ranging is not required to be performed by
2 the protection OSU after the protection switching in order to support the communications with the one or
3 more ONTs.

1 16. (original) The invention of claim 7, wherein step (a) comprises the step of synchronizing
2 frame counters at both the working and protection OSUs.

1 17. (currently amended) A machine-readable medium, having encoded thereon program
2 code, wherein, when the program code is executed by a machine, the machine implements, in an optical
3 network comprising an optical splitter connected to (1) a working optical subscriber unit (OSU) of a
4 working circuit via a working optical fiber, (2) a protection OSU of a protection circuit via a protection
5 optical fiber, and (3) one or more optical network terminals (ONTs), a method for enabling fast
6 protection switching from the working OSU to the protection OSU, comprising the steps of:

7 (a) synchronizing the working and protection OSUs;
8 (b) initiating a cell delineation procedure at the protection OSU during normal, non-ranging
9 operations of the working OSU to enable the protection OSU to correctly delineate upstream cells;
10 (c) measuring arrival times of corresponding upstream cells at both the working and
11 protection OSUs; and
12 (d) generating a propagation delay value based on the arrival times for use by the protection
13 OSU for communications with the one or more ONTs if and when protection switching is implemented
14 upon detection of a failure in the working circuit, wherein the optical network further comprises:
15 one or more additional working OSUs, each connected via an additional working optical fiber to
16 an additional optical splitter, which is further connected to one or more additional ONTs; and
17 an optical switch connected to each of the optical splitters via a protection optical fiber and to the
18 protection OSU, wherein the optical switch is controlled to sequentially connect the protection OSU to
19 each of the optical splitters to implement steps (a) through (d) to generate a different propagation delay
20 value for each working OSU for use by the protection OSU in ranging the one or more ONTs
21 corresponding to a particular working OSU if and when protection switching is implemented upon
22 detection of a failure in the working circuit corresponding to the particular working OSU.

1 18. (previously presented) The invention of claim 17, wherein the optical splitter is a
2 passive optical splitter and the optical network conforms to ITU-T Recommendation G.983.1.

1 19. (canceled)

1 20. (previously presented) The invention of claim 17, wherein the corresponding upstream
2 cells are upstream PLOAM cells that are not associated with ranging by the working OSU.

1 21. (previously presented) The invention of claim 17, wherein the propagation delay value
2 is generated taking into account differences in upstream and downstream transmission speeds that result
3 from different upstream and downstream transmission wavelengths.

1 22. (previously presented) The invention of claim 17, wherein the protection OSU is added
2 to the optical network after the working OSU has completed ranging for the one or more ONTs.

1 23. (previously presented) The invention of claim 17, wherein the cell delineation procedure
2 is implemented using a state machine comprising:

3 (A) a hunt state wherein different timing positions are used for different BMR reset pulses;
4 (B) a presync state wherein a single timing position is used for different BMR reset pulses;

5 and

6 (C) a sync state wherein a single timing position is used for different BMR reset pulses,
7 wherein:

8 (i) a state transition from the hunt state to the presync state occurs as soon as a first
9 specified number of valid sets of data are identified;

10 (ii) a state transition from the presync state to the hunt state occurs as soon as a
11 second specified number of invalid sets of data are identified;

12 (iii) a state transition from the presync state to the sync state occurs after a third
13 specified number of consecutive valid sets of data are identified; and

14 (iv) a state transition from the sync state to the hunt state occurs after a fourth
15 specified number of consecutive invalid sets of data are identified.

1 24. (previously presented) The invention of claim 23, wherein the first and second specified
2 numbers are both 1.

1 25. (previously presented) The invention of claim 17, wherein ranging is not required to be
2 performed by the protection OSU after the protection switching in order to support the communications
3 with the one or more ONTs.

1 26. (previously presented) The invention of claim 17, wherein step (a) comprises the step of
2 synchronizing frame counters at both the working and protection OSUs.

1 27. (new) In an optical network comprising an optical splitter connected to (1) a working
2 optical subscriber unit (OSU) of a working circuit via a working optical fiber, (2) a protection OSU of a
3 protection circuit via a protection optical fiber, and (3) one or more optical network terminals (ONTs), a
4 method for enabling fast protection switching from the working OSU to the protection OSU, comprising
5 the steps of:

6 (a) synchronizing the working and protection OSUs;

7 (b) initiating a cell delineation procedure at the protection OSU during normal, non-ranging
8 operations of the working OSU to enable the protection OSU to correctly delineate upstream cells;

9 (c) measuring arrival times of corresponding upstream cells at both the working and
10 protection OSUs; and

11 (d) generating a propagation delay value based on the arrival times for use by the protection
12 OSU for communications with the one or more ONTs if and when protection switching is implemented
13 upon detection of a failure in the working circuit, wherein the cell delineation procedure is implemented
14 using a state machine comprising:

15 (A) a hunt state wherein different timing positions are used for different BMR reset pulses;

16 (B) a presync state wherein a single timing position is used for different BMR reset pulses;
17 and

18 (C) a sync state wherein a single timing position is used for different BMR reset pulses,
19 wherein:
20 (i) a state transition from the hunt state to the presync state occurs as soon as a first
21 specified number of valid sets of data are identified;
22 (ii) a state transition from the presync state to the hunt state occurs as soon as a
23 second specified number of invalid sets of data are identified;
24 (iii) a state transition from the presync state to the sync state occurs after a third
25 specified number of consecutive valid sets of data are identified; and
26 (iv) a state transition from the sync state to the hunt state occurs after a fourth
27 specified number of consecutive invalid sets of data are identified.

1 28. (new) The invention of claim 27, wherein the first and second specified numbers are
2 both 1.

1 29. (new) A machine-readable medium, having encoded thereon program code, wherein,
2 when the program code is executed by a machine, the machine implements, in an optical network
3 comprising an optical splitter connected to (1) a working optical subscriber unit (OSU) of a working
4 circuit via a working optical fiber, (2) a protection OSU of a protection circuit via a protection optical
5 fiber, and (3) one or more optical network terminals (ONTs), a method for enabling fast protection
6 switching from the working OSU to the protection OSU, comprising the steps of:

7 (a) synchronizing the working and protection OSUs;
8 (b) initiating a cell delineation procedure at the protection OSU during normal, non-ranging
9 operations of the working OSU to enable the protection OSU to correctly delineate upstream cells;
10 (c) measuring arrival times of corresponding upstream cells at both the working and
11 protection OSUs; and
12 (d) generating a propagation delay value based on the arrival times for use by the protection
13 OSU for communications with the one or more ONTs if and when protection switching is implemented
14 upon detection of a failure in the working circuit, wherein the cell delineation procedure is implemented
15 using a state machine comprising:

16 (A) a hunt state wherein different timing positions are used for different BMR reset pulses;
17 (B) a presync state wherein a single timing position is used for different BMR reset pulses;
18 and

19 (C) a sync state wherein a single timing position is used for different BMR reset pulses,
20 wherein:

21 (i) a state transition from the hunt state to the presync state occurs as soon as a first
22 specified number of valid sets of data are identified;
23 (ii) a state transition from the presync state to the hunt state occurs as soon as a
24 second specified number of invalid sets of data are identified;
25 (iii) a state transition from the presync state to the sync state occurs after a third
26 specified number of consecutive valid sets of data are identified; and
27 (iv) a state transition from the sync state to the hunt state occurs after a fourth
28 specified number of consecutive invalid sets of data are identified.

1 30. (new) The invention of claim 29, wherein the first and second specified numbers are
2 both 1.